

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE INTERNALLY MIGRATED FEMALE WORKERS: A STUDY ON DHAKA CITY

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Abstract

The specific focus of this study is on the female workers of Dhaka city who are migrated from different parts of the country. It aims to explore how internally migrated female workers are subjected to discrimination in their workplaces. In this regard, the study has analysed the perceptions of internally migrated female workers employed in different sectors. The data collection methods include survey, KII, FGD and observation. The findings of this study show that more than one-fourth (29.17%) of the female workers perceive being discriminated in their workplaces. Sexual identity is found to be the key ground of discrimination. Discriminatory work environment prevails in almost all the sectors migrated female workers are employed in. The major types of discrimination identified by this study include gender-based disparity in payment, unfavourable work environment for women due to sexual harassment, invidious selection in hiring and promotion, and denial of rights during pregnancy. Though these forms of discrimination prevail across occupations, there are discrepancies in this regard. Domestic workers report the highest extent of pregnancy-related discrimination, but they emphasized on comparatively lower extent of gender-based payment disparity. Garment workers report a very low level of sexual harassment but a higher level of pay disparity. Payment disparity is a common concern identified across the occupations covered in this study.

Keywords: Migration, Female Workers, Discrimination, Human Rights, Garment workers

Introduction

The vulnerabilities of internally migrated female workers have become a growing concern in Bangladesh (Hoque & Kamruzzaman, 2016). With the two dimensions

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of vulnerability, displacement and gender, the population of this study are out of bargaining power for their rights. This type of situation leads them to a discriminatory environment and practices in their workplaces in Dhaka city. This is far from expected considering the country's constitutional promise, international commitment and liberal values to uphold individuals' human dignity and rights. Different sources (studies and reports) provide evidence that the female workers of Dhaka city who have been migrated from different parts of the country are the example of country's deviance from its promises of human rights. The most common pattern of internal migration is a demographic flow from rural to the urban setting (Shikdar, 2012). This phenomenon is parallel to the country's rapid urbanization and industrialization. Women's participation in the labour market has increased their mobility towards the industrial centres. Internally migrated women are generally involved in domestic works, RMG sectors, construction works, sweeping and cleaning (Afsar, 2003). Their deprivation of basic rights has been observed across all the sectors they are employed in. Different studies have found these women suffering from different forms of violations of their rights. In some cases, lack of adequate laws with proper execution of existing laws is also seriously insufficient (Ashok&Kusugal, 2019; Chowdhury, 2017).

The government of Bangladesh formulated some policies and Acts to ensure workers' rights, namely, Women and Children Violence Protection Law, 2000; Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Rules, 2013; Domestic Violence Act, 2010; Bangladesh Labour (amendment) Act, 2013 are the most noteworthy. It is also a constitutional obligation to make equal rights and opportunities in accessing employment and many other needs for all the citizens ignoring the sex. Articles number 10, 19 and 29 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh are the most luminous prospects for ensuring equality in national life and thus indicate to protect their human rights. Though a good number of legal instruments have been in place for protecting human rights, especially, in the workplace regarding safety, equality, wage, working environment and hours, female workers are found to be deprived of their rights and dignity for their sexual identity and so forth. Moreover, as they mostly come from underprivileged families and areas, they do not have enough leverage to bargain, associate and speak up to protect their rights. Thus, the chronicle of human rights violations continues. Though the instruments of human rights are available, the implementation of these instruments creates a huge challenge.

This research aims to explore how internally migrated female workers are discriminated in their workplaces in Dhaka city. At first, it explored how the female

workers perceive the extent and ground of discrimination they face unceasingly. Moreover, the research identifies different types or patterns of discrimination they encounter in their workplaces. The current study is expected to help the policymakers, government, concerned authorities, women advocates, human rights activists, researchers on the noted fields and internal migration along with other stakeholders to make a comprehensive look at the issues and come up with a specific resolution to solve this problem.

Literature Review

Internal migration in Bangladesh ranks one of the topmost positions in the global index of internal displacement and the yearly data for 2020 shows this country to be the third-highest producer of Internally Displaced People (IDP) in the world (IDMC, 2021). It is estimated that nearly 28% of women are actively involved in the labour market (ILO, 2017). The figure of domestic workers in Bangladesh is 10.5 million and approximately 90% of them are women (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The most important cause of internal migration is poverty and people choose Dhaka city for their livelihood (Hasan, 2019).

Researchers have already established that internally migrated female workers³ do not enjoy adequate rights as labourers or human beings (Hasan, 2019; Afsar, 2003). Though there are substantive policies, laws and rules which can address the protection and welfare of domestic workers, it is a common perception that they are the victims of gender-based violence of both physical and sexual in nature (Oxfam, 2020). Domestic workers do not have a standard salary scale for their job. They are dismissed completely from the state's only labour-related law. This issue has been regulated in Bangladesh according to the Domestic Servants Registration Ordinance 1961 which is not enough as a safeguard when it comes to the issue of upholding domestic workers' labour rights or human rights (Ashraf, 2015). The female construction workers in urban areas work for low daily wages ranging from taka 200 to 250 while encountering sexual harassment at their workplaces (Hossen et al., 2015). Garment industries also use them as a cheap source of labour (Halim & Kabir, 2005). This is a saddening fact considering the sector's 3.5 million workers where 60.8 percent are women, mostly migrated from outside of the city (Women's Participation in, 2018). The mishaps they encounter at their workplace include harassment, low wage, irregular payment, exposure to occupational hazards etc. (Pāla-Majumadāra, 2003).

³ Referred as female workers from hereon

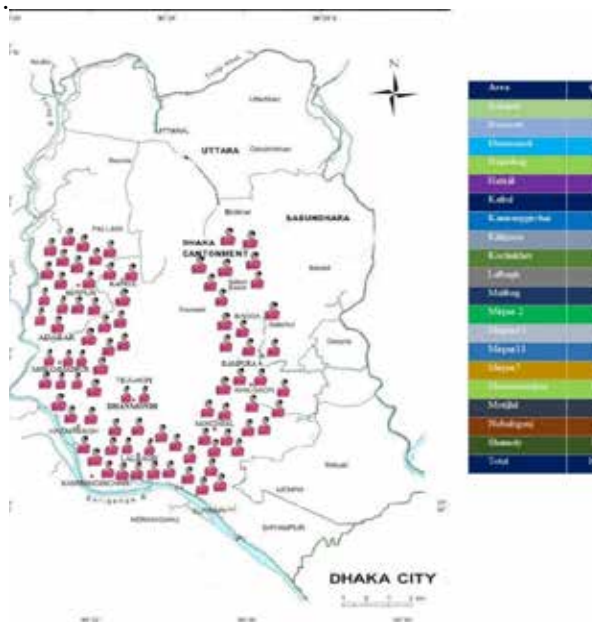
Most of the available literature has investigated the rights of female workers in specific occupations without paying much attention to the population's criteria of migration. Since many works of the literature suggest a flow of internal migration towards cities for livelihood, they might have some common pattern of challenges across occupations. Migration-related literature grossly misses this and rather focus on the push and pull factors that drive the demographic flow (Marshall and Rahman, 2013). Hence, the works cited earlier show how women have been deprived of their rights in different occupations. The current research also looks into the rights of female workers, but only those who joined the work after migrating from other areas of the country.

Methodology

Area of the study

This study is conducted in Dhaka metropolitan area divided into two parts: Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC). DNCC's total area covers 196.22 square kilometres (DNCC, 2020). This local government body consists of five zones including 54 Wards (Molla, 2017). The total area of DSCC is approximately 45 square kilometres (Bhattacharjee & Khan, 2016). This corporation consists of five zones like DNCC including 75 wards (Molla, 2017)

Map 1: Area of the study



Methodological approach

Understanding the status of the rights of internally migrated working women is not only a matter of numerical calculation but also a matter of the psycho-social realities of the relevant workers. Migrant people's reaction is difficult to understand only through numerical values mainly due to their different perceptions. The location change is not only a matter of numerical data but also the matter of their adaptation along with facilities and opportunities in the job place. Methodologically, only the qualitative or quantitative approach fails to depict a reasonable understanding of the study where numerical calculations (e.g., length of service, score etc.) and psychological issues (e.g., thinking, opinion etc.) are associated (Bergman, 2011). Therefore, the mixed method is applied in this study.

Sampling and data collection

The target group of the present study is migrated women in both of DNCC area and DSCC area. The study has covered 12 out of 54 wards from DNCC and 12 out of 75 wards from DSCC. The population size of this study is unknown, and the sample size is 120 which is between 96 and 384 ($96 < 120 < 384$) ensuring a 10% margin of error. The respondents have been selected using the snow-ball sampling method from the two study areas (85 from DNCC and 35 from DSCC). Though this is a non-probability sampling, it does not create any scope of biasness in the result. Due mainly to more garments factories and slum areas under DNCC, the present study gives more weight to this area compared to DSCC. That is why the sample size in DNCC is larger than that of DSCC ($85 > 35$). A survey has been conducted over the sampled 120 respondents and 13 respondents among them have been subject to in-depth interviews to explore their untold experiences and have in-depth insights into the context. Besides, a focus group discussion has been conducted with the women working in private hospitals and clinics. In addition, the researchers carried out observation method on a garments factory to find some objective inputs for empirical investigation.

Data Analysis

This study employs quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative analysis starts with the analysis of the demographic and economic profile of the respondents. Qualitative data has been thematically organized, cross-matched and analysed to induct the findings based on reliable facts and opinion that related to the matter.

Operational definitions

Rights

The term “right” generally denotes the legal and procedural entitlement to possess something or to do something. Beni Prasad considers rights as some social conditions and connects those to the development of personality (Levinson, 1986). Professor Laski said that a person cannot seek to be himself at his best unless rights prevail in society (Ghai, 1994). According to the United Nations, human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status (United Nations, n.d.). In this study, the term rights denote human rights concerning the labour rights perceived to be enjoyed by the internally migrated female workers. It covers the rights of working within a scheduled timeframe, protecting professional security and health, agreement and human resource-related rights, wages and remunerations, opportunity to make and be engaged with the organization, having been treated equally regardless of sexual identity, and relief from the forced labour.

Internal Migration

Scholars defined migration based on the movement of people from one place to another place having substantial distance and stay at the new place for considerable duration. Thus, the definition of migration has two dimensions; temporal and spatial (Niedomysl&Fransson, 2014). Spatial dimension is often determined by administrative boundaries and in case of internal migration, the distance does not cross national border. Even within a country’s national border, migration can occur both in short distance and long distance. Short distance movements are mainly caused by housing problems whereas long distance movements are dominantly caused by livelihood issues (Morrison & Clark, 2011; Niedomysl, 2011). In the current study, both temporal and spatial dimensions are measured in the demographic analysis of the sample, but they are not focused as arbitrary determinants of internal migration. Rather, the occupational settlement at the new place (in this case Dhaka city) is considered as the criteria to identify the person as internally migrated.

Discrimination

Better work, a joint initiative of ILO and IFC, has introduced a framework of core labour standards which operationalize discrimination as the unequal treatments based on race, colour, sex, religion, social origin etc (ADB, 2006).

Such discrimination can result from an employer's action, but its source can also be grounded deep beneath the structure of a market, an institution or a system. This study applies ILO's core labour standards, where discrimination faced by the female workers at their workplace is portrayed by several compliance factors such as salary, harassments and other occupational discrimination.

Demographic and Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

To understand the in-depth situation and scenario of the participants, the demographic profile is divided into two major parts: socio-demographic profile and economic profile. The below table shows the socio-demographic information of the survey respondents.

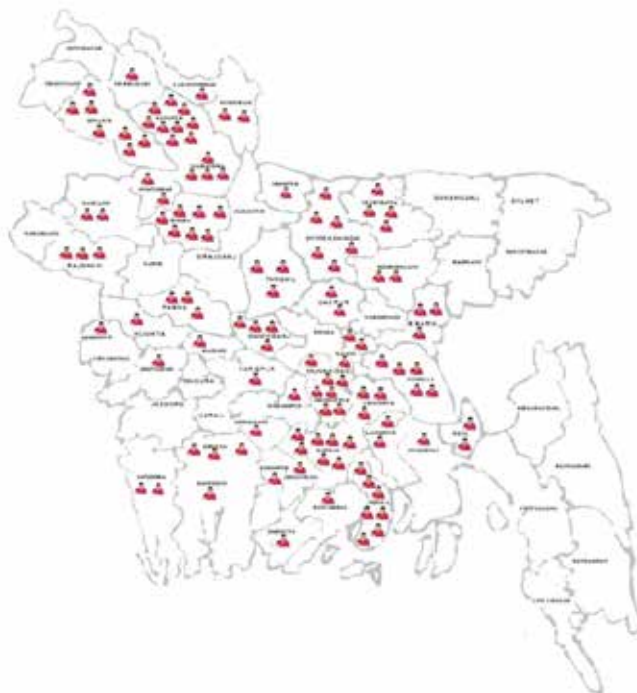
Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Criteria	Category	Frequency	Percentage (valid)
Occupations	Domestic Worker	41	34.2
	Garments Worker	34	28.3
	Day Laborers	10	8.3
	Cleaner	21	17.5
	Others	14	11.6
Marital Status	Married	84	70
	Unmarried	14	11.7
	Divorced	14	11.7
	Widowed	8	6.7
Educational Qualifications	Illiterate	25	26.3
	Informal Education	20	21
	Primary	20	21
	Secondary	26	27.4
	Higher Secondary	4	4.2
	<i>Missing Value</i>	25	
Age	16-25 Years	47	39.2
	26-35 Years	49	40.8
	36-45 Years	21	17.5
	46< Years	3	2.5
Length of Migration	1-5 Years	94	78.3
	6-10 Years	26	21.7

Among the participants of the survey, more than one-third (34.2%) are domestic workers, whereas, a few of them work as day labourers, and more than one-fourth (28.3%) are in the garment sector. The majority (70%) of the participants are married; some of them are widowed and the rest of them are either divorced or

unmarried. The education level of the participants is also portrayed in the table where more than one-fourth (26.3%) of the respondents have no formal education and approximately one-fifth (21%) of them are informally educated. Those who received formal education include 21% only primary level and 27.4% up to secondary level whereas only 4.2% went to college for higher secondary level education. About two-fifths of the participants in the survey are aged from 16 to 25 years and an almost equal number of people are 26 to 36 years old. The rest 20% of the respondents are aged above 36 years of age. These workers have all migrated to Dhaka within the last ten years and they are from all around the country. The districts from where they migrated are portrayed in the map below:

Map 2: Districts of origin of the migrated women workers (One icon for one respondent)



The economic profile is important to measure the rights of migrant workers. Their monthly income, savings, family members and earning members are relevant to their economic profile.

Table 2: Economic Profile of the Respondents

Criteria	Category	Frequency	Percentage (valid)
Monthly Earning	1300-5000 BDT	27	22.5
	5001-10000 BDT	87	72.5
	10001-15000 BDT	6	5
Monthly Savings	200-1500 BDT	34	69.4
	1501-3000 BDT	12	24.5
	3001-5000 BDT	3	6.1
	<i>Missing Value</i>	71	
Family Member	1-3 person	46	39
	4-6 persons	63	53.4
	7-10 persons	9	7.6
Number of dependent persons	No Dependent	2	1.8
	1-2 Persons	47	41.2
	3-5 Persons	59	51.7
	6-9 Persons	6	5.3

The majority (72.5%) of the female workers earn a monthly wage between 5001 and 10000 BDT. About one-fifth (22.5%) of them earn even lower, an amount of 1300 to 5000 BDT per month. Very few (6%) of the respondents earn an amount in the range 10,000-15,000 BDT in a month. Majority (69.4%) of the female workers save an amount from 200 to 1500 BDT in a month. More than half (53.4%) of the female workers belong to a family of 4 to 6 members whereas, many families (64.9%) consist of 1 to 3 persons. In most cases, other members of their families depend on their earnings. More than half (51.7%) of the respondents have 3-5 dependent persons whereas, close to half (41.2%) of them have 1-2 dependent persons. Besides, very few (5.3%) of the respondents have to spend their earnings for 6 or more persons dependent on them.

Extents and Grounds of Discrimination

Though the respondents are mostly dropped out from primary and secondary schools, they have their commonsensical understanding of discrimination and they perceive its prevalence in their everyday experiences.

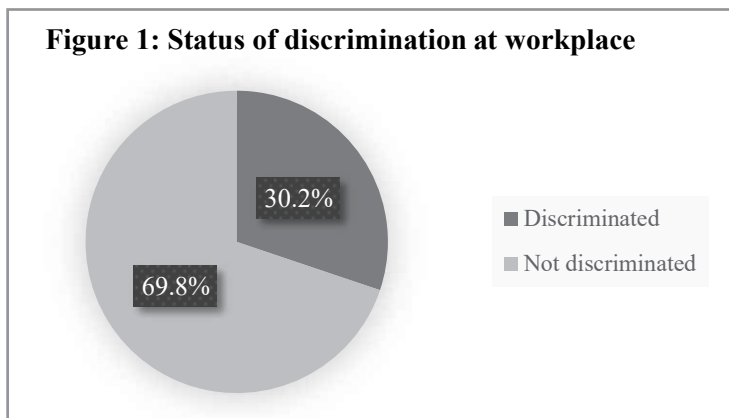


Figure 1 demonstrates the perceptions of female workers in Bangladesh about the discrimination at their workplace. More than one-fourth (29.2%) of the female workers surveyed have agreed about the prevalence of discrimination in their workplace. Though majority of the respondents (67.5%) have reported no experience of such discrimination, this is far from standard because all of them are entitled to be free from any form of discrimination. In fact, their perceptions on discrimination may vary as many of them are not aware of their rights since a significant portion of the respondents have no formal education.

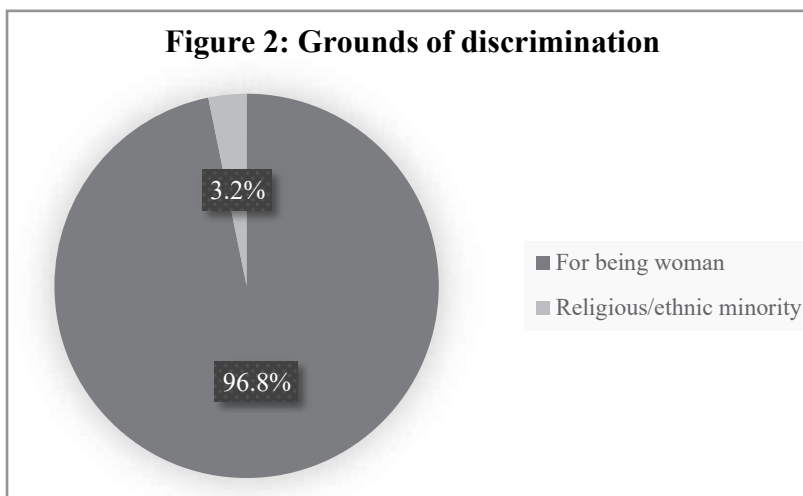
Table 3: Discrimination based on occupation

Type of occupation	Discriminated		Not discriminated	
	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic Worker	3	7.9	35	92.1
Garments Worker	17	50	17	50
Day Labourer	5	50	5	50
Others	10	29.4	24	70.6
Total	35	30.2	81	69.8

Table 3 depicts that discrimination against female workers varies across occupations. Among the respondents who work at garments and as day laborers, half of the workers (50%) experience discrimination at their workplaces. Hence, it could be perceived that discrimination is significantly associated with the types of occupation. Women workers are assigned in the conventional works and have

no prospect of upgrading career which can be described as discrimination in appointment and promotion. More than one-fourth (29.4%) of the participants of other occupations like cleaners and construction workers have also shared their experience of discrimination at work. However, compared to other occupations, very few domestic workers (7.9%) perceive any work-related discrimination.

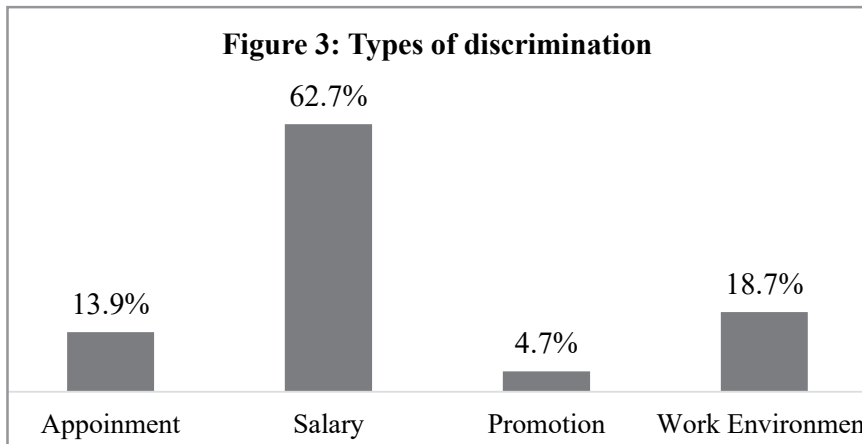
Women’s perception on the ground of their discrimination is presented with the following figure.



Those who identify themselves as discriminated consider three grounds in this regard: (1) gender (2) ethnic identity and (3) religious identity. Almost all of them (96.8%) opined that they experienced discrimination at their workplace for being women. Very few of them have claimed that their discrimination is grounded on their minority identity: either religious or ethnic. Authority is the key perpetrator concerning the discrimination of women workers whereas their male counterparts are also responsible in this regard.

Discrimination Types

The respondents of this study have shown the lack of awareness regarding their rights as workers.



Many women workers are found psychologically so compromised with the situation that they cannot distinct discrimination from normalcy. Some of the respondents even think it is acceptable for the women to have less payment for being women.

Figure 3 shows different types of discriminations faced by the female workers. This analysis has been conducted with the responses of those workers who have reported their experience of discrimination. Majority of them felt discriminated in payments. A significant number of them identified discriminatory work environment which means that female workers struggle for comfort in their work environment. Some respondents found discrimination in the appointment and promotion of women workers in the job.

Case 01: Eti

Discrimination of Female Workers

Eti (Pseudonym), an unmarried 24-year-old girl, works in a garments factory. When she was eighteen, one of her aunts engaged her in this job and her parents agreed due to poor condition of the household. Her salary is much less than that of her male colleagues and this gap is almost double. She also faces discriminatory treatment in the behavior of her employer as well as male co-workers. She encountered threat of sexual harassment in the factory. Moreover, some basic facilities like hygienic sanitary toilet, fresh water, change room, breast feeding room are totally absent in her factory. There is only one latrine for women in each floor which is far from enough to support the huge pressure of female workers. Eti earns around 7000 BDT per month and remits 2000-3000 BDT to her parents in village which is the only happiness of her life.

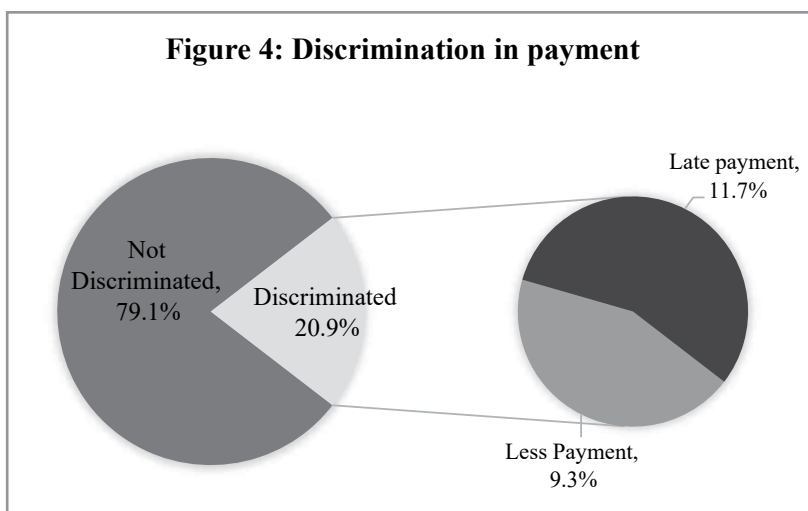
Source: Eti, personal communication, November 29, 2018)

Discrimination of appointment and promotion

Women are generally preferred in some works such as domestic works, garment factory, Aya⁴ of hospital. Therefore, women are not denied of work based on gender in these sectors. However, this kind of discrimination is reported by a construction worker. Construction work is considered demanding of hard labour and the employers discourage women. Besides, though female worker dominated sectors are not known for discrimination in recruitment, promotion is an issue of serious concern. Management posts are male dominated and it is difficult for the female workers to get promoted to these posts because of a stereotypical perception of women’s lack of fitness in leadership or administrative works. Pregnancy is found to be a cause of appointment related discrimination. Figure 10 shows that 3% of the pregnant workers got fired from their job and 13% were demoted from their positions. More than 80 percent of them experienced a cut in the payment. It shows that the employers do not, generally, consider pregnant workers as employable.

Discrimination related to Salary and Remuneration

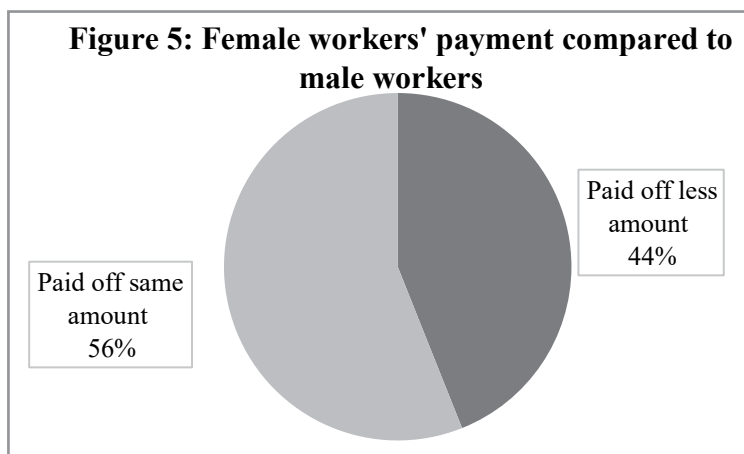
Payment is a major area of discrimination as per the experience of female workers in Bangladesh.



Approximately one-fifth (20.9%) of the female workers in Bangladesh have the experience of discrimination in getting salary. Most of these respondents

⁴ Those who assist nurses hospitals

experience delayed payment of the salary, whereas the rest of them think they are paid less than they deserve. Moreover, they hardly get a raise even if they continue to work for years in the same factory (Merina Akter, personal communication, November 30, 2021). In government hospitals, many women work as contractual Aya⁵ whom the authority do not pay, since they get some tip from the patients for serving them with cleaning, changing, and other small chores. However, this kind of payment does not have any security. They face hard time when they cannot manage to get paid by the patients (Murshida Begum, personal communication, November 28, 2021).



The status of payment compared to male counterpart or colleagues is depicted in the figure 5. Close to half of the participants (44.4%) said that they are paid less wages and remuneration compared to their male colleagues. For instance, in the private clinics and hospitals, ward boys get higher payment than their female counterparts known as Aya. In fact, Ayashave to work more and harder than the ward boys (Amena, November 28, 2021). Female garment workers also said that their male colleagues are paid more wage than them. Eti, a garment worker, thinks she is treated as a woman not as a worker because all workers doing the same job should receive equal payment (personal communication, November 29, 2021). Besides, female security guards are paid less than the male security guards in the garment factories (Sheuli, personal communication, November 30, 2021).

The male and female workers are considered for different kinds of jobs. Having the same educational qualifications and skills, or even less, a male worker can

⁵ Support staffs who work as the helping hand in the patient management, cleaning, room management etc. at hospitals and clinics.

work as a supervisor or floor in charge whereas a woman is assigned to low paying conventional sewing job. Male workers can be promoted faster but female workers are hardly considered for such promotions whether they perform well or work for long or prove their commitment towards the work (RoksanaAkter, Jesmin and Nurufa, personal communication, 30 November,2021).

The similar discrimination is also found in other occupations. In tailoring shops, usually the cutting masters are always male where female workers run swing machines. However, a female cutting master is found who gets less payment than the male employees of her post (Josna Begum, personal communication, November 26, 2021). Another in-depth interview (IDI) respondent who work as a sweeper of a housing society have shared that the male sweepers work with her in the same society but get taka 500 to 1,000 more per month only because they are male (Sabina Khatun⁶, personal communication, November 28, 2021).

Table 4: Status of Less payment Than Male Counterpart based on occupation

Type of occupation	Less payment		Equal payment	
	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic Worker	7	35	13	65
Garments Worker	15	46.9	17	53.1
Day Labourer	3	50	3	5
Others	15	46.9	17	53.1
Total	40	44.4	50	55.6

Based on the types of occupation, the payment made to the male and female workers varies. The status of discrimination based on occupation is portrayed in the table 4. The highest prevalence of male-female payment discrimination is found in the day laborers. Garment workers are also close to half (46.9% each) in their response acknowledging discriminatory ratio of male-female payment. A construction worker, RabeyaAkter, has shared about her deprivation from the equal pay for same work compared to her male co-workers. The employer treats her in a way that she deserves less payment for just being a woman (RabeyaAkter, personal communication, December 5, 2021). Domestic workers are found to make comparatively less complaint in this question. In Bangladesh, domestic work is mainly a highly female dominated job and there is less opportunity to compare between the payment of male and female workers in this occupation.

⁶ pseudonym

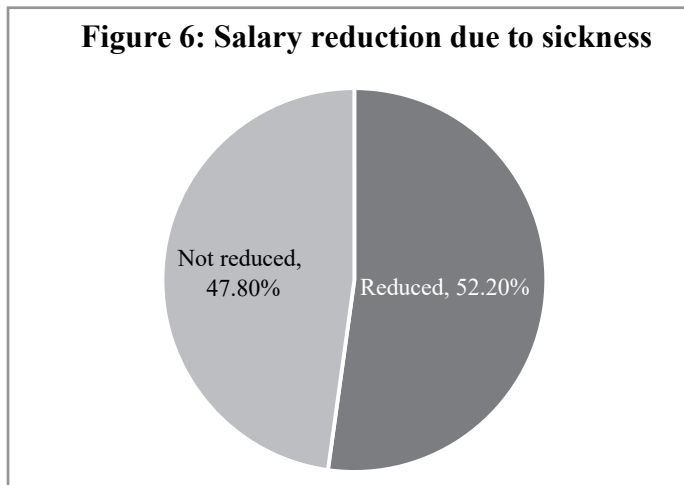
Case 2: Josna Begum

Unequal Payment for the Woman Worker

Josna Begum, a 40-year-old lady, migrated to Dhaka from Pabna two years back with her husband and the only son due mainly to lack of job opportunities in her native area. She married her present husband after the death of her first husband who she married at the age of 13. She started her career as a sewing worker and later upgraded to cutter master of that tailor by toiling hard. She has to take huge responsibilities especially during heavy workload on several occasions like Eid. Now her monthly income is around 8000-9000 BDT. Josna's workplace has no hygienic sanitation system, even not fresh drinking water facility. She has to endure her employer's harassment, huge pressure of works, harassment from customers as well as less salary. The same shop has another cutting master who is a male. The male cutting master is paid more than Josna Begum not because of work but because he is a male. Still, she tolerates this not to lose her job which is the second highest income after her husband 'sincome of the household.

Source: Josna Begum, personal communication, November 26, 2018

Though leave is considered as a right of workers in standard legal practice, curtailing salary against deserved leave is commonly practiced against workers. Such a practice discourages workers from taking leave and this is a way of sanctioning them which force them to work. The following figure analyses the status of female workers' right to take leave when they are sick, or any health emergency occurs.



Among the respondents, more than half (52.20%) have marked that the salary is deducted due to sickness and emergency leave whereas, less than half replied about

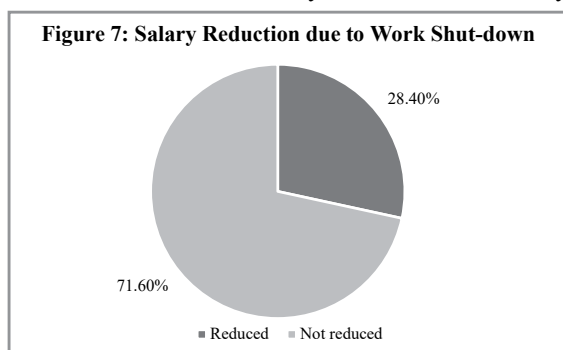
no deduction of actual salary. The employer demands prior notice and permission as the condition of payment against leave. However, they cannot take prior permission in cases of emergency health problems. Taking emergency leave may cost them not only the payment cut but also the job (Monjila, Nurufa, Salma, garment workers, November 30, 2021).

Table 5: Status of salary reduction due to sickness or emergency leave based on occupation

Type of occupation	Reduced		Not Reduced	
	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic Worker	12	30.8	27	69.2
Garments Worker	28	82.4	6	17.6
Day Labourer	5	55.6	4	44.4
Others	15	45.5	18	54.5
Total	60	52.2	55	47.8

Salary and remuneration reduction due to sickness or emergency leave from the job varies across occupations. A great majority (82.4%) of the respondents among the garment workers acknowledge about the reduction of salary due to sickness or emergency leave. More than half (55.6%) of the day laborers also opine the same. Moreover, nearly half (45.5%) of the cleaners, contractual workers at hospitals and street vendors also state that their salary is curtailed in cases of sickness and emergency leave. However, in the case of domestic workers, more than thirty percent (30.8%) were paid off reduced salary for the same reason.

Though the salary of the female workers is limited and sometimes it is burden to bear the family expenditure with these limited earnings, the reduction of salary for any reason might be the extra burden to them. The figure 7 depicts the status of salary reduction due to the work shut down for any reason not caused by the employees.



More than one-fourth (28.40%) of the participants to this segment have responded that they experience reduced payment due to cease at work for any irregular reason not induced by workers.

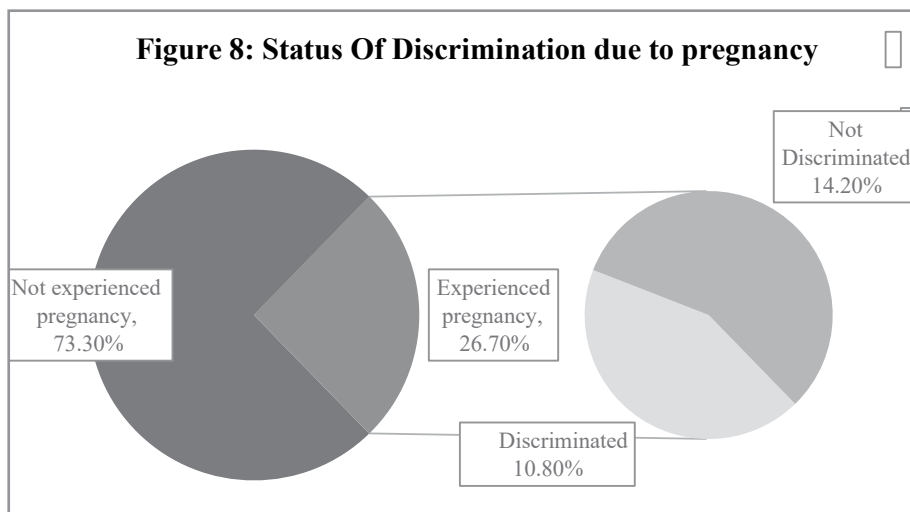
Table 6: Status of salary reduction due to work off or shut down based on occupation

Type of occupation	Reduced		Not Reduced	
	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic Worker	5	35.7	9	64.3
Garments Worker	8	27.6	21	72.4
Day Labourer	5	55.6	4	44.4
Others	5	17.2	5	17.2
Total	23	37.1	39	62.9

Based on occupation, the reduction of salary due to workplace off also varies across occupations (see table 6) portrays this variation across occupation. More than half of the participants to the study who work as day laborers are paid off reduced salary in such cases. More than one-third (35.7%) of the domestic workers also opine that they are paid reduced amount due to postponement of the work by the employers. Moreover, more than one-fourth (27.6%) of the garment workers are also paid off reduced salary due to the factory off or shut down.

Discrimination in Work Environment

Female workers reported how they adjust with uncomfortable conditions at the workplace. They complain about the hygiene standard and the absence of other women specific needs such as breastfeeding corners, separate changing rooms etc. Two aspects are found significant regarding female worker's condition in the work environment; pregnancy and sexual abuse. Pregnancy is also related to the previously discussed types of discrimination; it is discussed under work environment due to the unease created for them by all types of unwelcoming and unaccommodating treatments. Pregnancy makes it difficult for the female workers to carry on their jobs with all the rights. The status of discrimination due to the pregnancy is illustrated in the figure 8.



More than one-fourth (26.7%) of the participants experienced pregnancy during their job. More than half of those who had this experience were discriminated due to pregnancy.

Table 7: Status of discrimination due to pregnancy based on occupation

Type of occupation	Discriminated		Not Discriminated	
	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic Worker	4	80	1	20
Garments Worker	3	25	9	75
Others	6	50	6	50
Total	13	45	16	55

Status of discrimination due to the pregnancy is significantly associated with the types of occupations. The table 8 demonstrates an occupation wise analysis of the status of discrimination due to the pregnancy. A great majority (80.0%) of the domestic workers reported discrimination. At the time of pregnancy, having work opportunity as a domestic worker is difficult. Sometimes, the husband of the pregnant woman leaves her alone in this critical situation making the situation even worse for the woman (Rita, Hashi and Golapi, personal communication, November 30, 2021).

The half of the cleaners or contractual construction workers and one fourth of the garment workers have been discriminated after being pregnant. Day laborers give a

non-discrimination response as it is not applicable due to the fluid nature of their employment where they do not have any permanent contract; rather, they employ themselves to the employers' work willingly on day basis. Therefore, they may consider it their choice to keep distance from job during pregnancy.

Three types of discrimination are found to be caused by the employer to the female workers: firing from the job, demotion to the lower position and wage reduction. A great majority (83.33%) of the female workers who were pregnant during the job have made it clear that their wage and remuneration were reduced due to the pregnancy. Some (13%) argued about the demotion to the lower position and rest of them experienced being fired from the job.

Sexual harassment is usually discussed under the theme of violence. However, this harassment is known to exclusive in targeting the female workers only, which makes the issue one of gender-based discrimination. Ensuring the violence free workplace is one of the most crucial responsibilities of the authority.

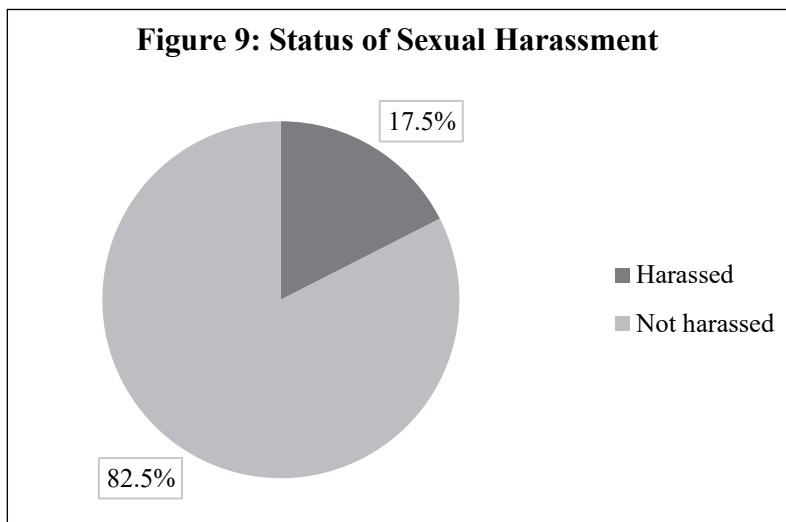


Figure 9 illustrates the sexual harassment at the workplace. Among the female workers surveyed for the study, a notable part (17.5%) have been sexually harassed in their workplace. For an offense like sexual harassment, one fifth of the female workers is an alarming figure. Prevalence of this issue makes the work environment more unfavourable than their male counterparts.

Table 8: Status of sexual harassment based on occupation

Type of occupation	Harassed		Not Harassed	
	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic worker	10	24.4	31	75.6
Garments Worker	1	2.9	33	97.1
Day Labourer	3	30.0	7	70.0
Others	7	20.0	28	80.0
Total	21	17.5	99	82.5

The sexual harassment differs in terms of occupation. Table 7 shows the status of sexual harassment across occupations. More than one-fourth (30.0%) of the day labours have experienced sexual harassment in their workplace. The domestic worker working at the households are also not safe in their workplace. About one-third (24.40%) of the domestic workers were sexually harassed. In contrast, the rate of sexual harassment among the garments workers is very low (2.9%). Since the garment workers work in a restricted environment, they seem to be reserve in sharing about sexual harassment issue. One of the respondents have opined that many female workers experience the sexual harassment but, most of the times, these sexually harassed female workers do not complain to the authority or the concerned persons in fear of being fired from the job or losing personal dignity. She has shared that she was witness to a sexual abuse in her factory where the victim kept silence to save her job (Akhi, personal communication, November 30, 2021).

Thirty percent of day laborers and one fifth of other workers have also reported their experience of sexual harassment in and around work. Josna Begum, a cutting master of a tailoring shop, also experiences sexual harassment by the customers while delivering the products. Occasionally, some customers verbally abuse her (J. Begum, personal communication, November 29, 2021). The cleaners and contractual assistants at hospitals have also reported to be sexually harassed in their workplace. The case of Shimla Akter is one of proof of such harassment. Some of her co-workers use slang languages towards hers and other female workers (S. Akter, personal communication, November 28, 2021).

Conclusion

Internally migrated women of Dhaka city find employment in low-paid jobs which worsens with the gender-based discrimination. Discrimination of female workers is not a new phenomenon, but their limited bargaining power keep no option but to

endure the misery. In-depth investigation reveals that the female workers are hardly expressive about their discrimination due to an active environment of fear they live in. The gendered dimension of these discriminations are prominently recognizable by their connectedness to feminine aspects of these workers. There exists a stereotypical gendered categorization of works which is not only discriminating female workers from particular jobs but also preventing their vertical growth by identifying management as men's work. Their vulnerability of sexual harassment and biological needs due to reproductive system demands particular needs which are often missing from the infrastructure as well as the system. Besides these, the most hyped phenomenon of gender discrimination is reflected in the unequal payment. Like many others, the current study has also found these statistics across the works. Having constitutional guarantees, legal instruments and even civil society invigilance often fail to regulate the labour market to end this practice. There is a dire need of change in this situation, but the change requires appropriate intervention guided by proper analysis. Internal migration of women is likely to be continued in upcoming days due to the growing stressors of environmental changes, urbanization, economic marginalization etc. Therefore, more attention is required for facilitating better occupational rehabilitation of these internally migrated women with the insurance of non-discriminatory treatment.

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